a **Socialist Worker** leaflet

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Smash the Nazi menace

Within living memory of the holocaust, in which millions died at the hands of the Nazis, fascism is once again rearing its ugly head. In Germany and across Europe, neo-nazis are trying to build a mass movement through a murderous campaign of racism and anti-immigrant bigotry. And in Canada, small groups of fascist scum like the Heritage Front (HF) are trying to mimic the successes of their cronies in Europe.

But the growth of fascism is not inevitable. In Europe, hundreds of thousands have demonstrated against nazi fire-bombings and other attacks. In Canada, demonstrations by hundreds in Ottawa and Toronto and by three thousand in Vancouver last January show the potential to build a broad-based united front against the fascists.

While fascist groups in Canada are growing more confident, they are still weak. Despite their best efforts, they are unable to turn out more than a few dozen to their rallies and marches. But this doesn't mean that we can accept the strategy of liberals who think cops, courts and mainstream politicians will stop racism.

It is these same mainstream parties that create the conditions in which fascism can grow — by slashing jobs, wages and social services to make working people pay for the bosses' recession and by scapegoating immigrants and people of colour. And as anti-racist demonstrators have learned time and again, the cops always protect the nazis and usually end up viciously attacking anti-racists. This is right in keeping with the long history of racist shootings and harassment by cops from L.A. to Oka to Toronto.

Shut the Nazis Down

To stop the nazis from growing we have to build a movement strong enough to smash their marches and shut down their public events. Demonstrators in Vancouver in January and in Ottawa last month showed it is possible to build militant actions involving the labour movement, blacks, immigrants, native people, lesbians and gays, women's organizations and the left. Only this kind of *united front* can physically stop the neo-nazis, even when the cops protect them.

It was exactly this tactic that smashed the fascist National Front in Britain in the late 70s. When the NF tried to march through the largely immigrant neighborhood of Lewisham, the Socialist Worker's Party (sister organization to the International Socialists) built a counter demonstration of 5,000, including thousands of local black and white youth, trade unionists, socialists and anti-racists. With these numbers, the anti-fascists were able to smash through the police riot squads to break up the nazi march. This victory, together with the launch of the Anti-Nazi League, dealt British fascism a political defeat from which it has yet to recover.

Building a United Front

This kind of united front can stop the neo-nazis in Canada. But there are no short cuts to building an anti-racist movement capable of mass mobilization. Small groups of militants will not stop the Heritage Front through petty confrontations with the cops or the fascists. Individual heroics can't overcome the cops and won't demoralize the nazis. Moreover, this tactic can end up giving the fascists a focus, and the failure to mobilize large numbers of anti-racists can increase the nazis' confidence.

In Toronto there is the potential for a much broader and stronger anti-racist fightback. When the Metro police viciously attacked the Anti Racist Action (ARA) demo last January, representatives of black and anti-racist groups, women's organizations and the union movement publicly supported ARA and denounced the cops. But ARA has failed to consolidate this support and build a sustainable mass fightback.

Instead, ARA has focussed on isolated street mobilizations against the fascists. Such actions by small groups of militants, however well intended, cannot stop the Heritage Front. Instead, we need to isolate and defeat the HF *politically* by mobilizing in the thousands to shut them down.

This means building a broad anti-racist coalition that focuses on activism and mass mobilization. It means exposing the Heritage Front as a Nazi Front. It means taking on the systemic racism that creates the conditions in which the nazis grow — from racist police violence to the backlash against immigrants, native people and francophones. And it means building concrete links with groups who have a direct interest in fighting racism and bigotry — immigrants and people of colour, native people, trade unions, women's groups, lesbian and gay organizations and students.

There is a real opportunity to build a genuine united front against the fascists.

THE NAZI MENACE CAN BE SMASHED!